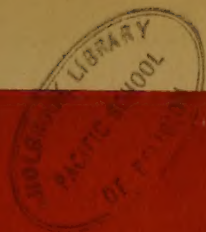


OCTOBER 1954



Christian News-Letter

WHAT HAPPENED AT EVANSTON

Elsie Chamberlain

LIFE IN COMMUNIST CHINA

Margaret Kiesow

THE WORKER PRIESTS

Pierre Bungener

EDITED BY JOHN LAWRENCE

Published quarterly by

THE CHRISTIAN FRONTIER COUNCIL

CHRISTIAN NEWS-LETTER

Editor: John Lawrence. Assistant Editor: Mark Gibbs.

Editorial Secretary: Mrs. Vera Traill.

Vol. 2, No. 4

October 1954

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Subscription 10/6 per annum. Special rate for full-time students and missionaries 5/- post free. Single copies available on request 2/6 (post free 2/8).

Subscriptions to:

Oxley & Son (Windsor) Ltd.,
4 High Street, Windsor.

Editorial Correspondence:

24 St. Leonard's Terrace,
London, S.W.3.

The Christian Frontier Council, under whose auspices this journal is published, is a fellowship of 30 or 40 lay men and women who hold responsible positions in secular life and have met regularly for the past eleven years to explore with each other the practical implications of their faith. They include members of all denominations. From time to time the Council forms specialised groups to deal with subjects such as politics, medicine or education. The Council does not seek publicity, but on appropriate occasions the substance of its discussions will be made known in this journal. The Editor is solely responsible for what is published in "Christian News-Letter".

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CHRISTIAN NEWS-LETTER

From the Editor

Mr. Attlee and his colleagues who went to China were often criticized simply for the fact of their journey. No doubt their mission was likely to annoy some of our friends whatever its outcome; no doubt, too, it would have been easy for them to be indiscreet or to succumb to the blandishments of their hosts, but experienced statesmen must be trusted to look after themselves on such occasions. I personally do not like everything that they said on their return, but I have to put up with that. For if we do not meet our Communist opponents, how can we ever hope to come to an understanding with them? It is clear that the Russians and the Chinese have changed their policy about contacts with the rest of the world. At this time of day no one will lightly assume that this is more than a passing change of tactics, but it might be much more and we must use all our chances to discover what is happening.

The Communists are pushed along by a changing world as much as we are, and we may be sure that the Communist countries will in the end turn into something different from what they are now, though we do not know what that will be. The death of Stalin and the rise of Communist China are changing the Communist half of the world, and we must be ready to use any opportunity which future changes may give us. Chinese Communism may be worse or better than Russian Communism, but in the long run it will certainly be different, for there are no races more different from each other than the Russians and the Chinese.

The Russians do not understand compromise, they love to follow things to the end, they are capable of using "the relentless logic of the lunatic asylum" to draw extreme conclusions from unexamined premises, and in politics they have a tradition of heavy-handed centralism. But the Chinese are compromisers—among them one man can hold three religions without any sense of incongruity, and

the Chinese Empire is history's great example of decentralized rule. In China family discipline and convention have done many of the things which are done by the state in other societies. The greatest failure of the Russian Bolsheviks is their failure to understand the peasants or to get their co-operation, but Chinese Communism was built on the peasants from the start. Mao has not always followed Stalin's line, and the Chinese know that they are applying Marxism in new conditions. Russian Communism is very Russian in its violence and blindness; there are times when Chinese Communism seems to be replacing Confucian convention with all-pervading Communist conventions—a subtler form of Communism and therefore less predictable, but not the less dangerous for that.

On another page a missionary returned from China describes what she saw. She would not claim to have seen more than a small part of the picture, but her evidence cannot be dismissed. The Communist China which Mrs. Kiesow knew is very different from anything in the Stalinist Russia which I knew. It is more like the Russia of Lenin's time. It may be that the differences are mainly a question of the stage of development; in a few years China may have her Stalin, but no one can be sure of that.

In Russia the Orthodox Church was one of the chief props of the old regime, but in China the old order rested on the agnostic philosophy of Confucius. Moreover not one in two hundred Chinese are Christian. There are not more than three million Christians of all classes, but there are something like a hundred and fifty million Buddhists and forty-eight million Moslems in China. So for the Chinese, religion means in the first place Buddhism and Islam or Confucianism and Taoism, if you call those philosophies religions. In the first days of Communist rule and during the Korean war, Christianity was severely persecuted, and the Roman Catholic Church is still under very heavy pressure, but to-day it seems that the non-Roman churches have opportunities which would have seemed impossible two years ago. This change is certainly not due to any tenderness towards Christianity, but Christianity has benefited from a change in policy which is chiefly concerned with other religions. The Chinese themselves have too much of the religion of good form to be greatly concerned with any other sort of religion, but the "National Minorities" are a very substantial part of the population, some big resources lie in their areas and they are religious. They would not be loyal citizens if their religions were persecuted, and the Government has decided to humour them. A toleration extended to

Buddhism, Islam and Animism has benefited Christianity incidentally. During the Korean war all Christian Churches were distrusted—and persecuted—as being supposed to be connected with Western Imperialism. The Roman Catholics still suffer for the anti-Communist politics of the Vatican, but it seems that in Communist eyes the other Churches are now purged of their foreign associations. Their leadership is purely Chinese, as a small minority they are no threat to the Government; and in some places at least their members are able to take an active part in public affairs in a way that would be impossible in Russia. Leading Christians hold high office in the Central Government and in at least one Provincial Government, and in the administration of at least one of the largest cities. In some districts there are also Christians who take an active part in the local Councils, whose deliberations seem to be more real than those of the corresponding Russian Soviets.

If all this happened in Russia one would suspect that it was a facade intended to mislead the faithful, but the Chinese Christians are few and it would hardly be worth while for the Government to alter its policy for their benefit. One might also suspect that prominent Christians in the Chinese Communist administration would be half-hearted in their Christianity, and there may well be stooges among them. But if I may believe the information which reaches me, some of them are deeply sincere men and women who believe that it is their duty *as Christians* to take part in public life. That is not to say that the Chinese Christians are happy about the state of their country; many of them are not. But they see a chance to play their part on the Christian frontier to-day. To-morrow is another matter, but sufficient unto the day be the evil thereof. The present opportunities may pass or they may be enlarged. No one can tell. But many Chinese Christians feel that opportunities of service must be taken where they are given.

A Question of Translation

Commenting on Dr. Oldham's article on science and religion in the last CHRISTIAN NEWS-LETTER, a correspondent writes:

"I do not believe that it is purely a linguistic question. Dr. Oldham's analogy of preaching the gospel in English to a Bantu-speaking audience with the communication between religion and science will not hold water. It is perfectly true that science possesses a vocabulary, a jargon of its own, but this is a technical necessity. After all, theology

is also forced to use a technical language". Dr. Oldham replies:

"The analogy I used of addressing a Bantu-speaking audience in English certainly does not hold in the purely linguistic sphere. Conversation with a fellow-Englishman who is a scientist makes sense in a way that the other does not. But in regard to real *communication*, which is what I was concerned about, I believe that the analogy is valid. The point I wanted to make is that, in my experience at least, the way in which Christianity is normally presented makes no sense at all to those who have been brought up outside the Christian tradition, and that if this situation is to be remedied, the clergy and other Christian teachers have to make an effort of understanding the other point of view and its presuppositions comparable to the task of learning a foreign language. The Report to the Assembly of the World Council of Churches at Evanston on 'Christ, the Hope of the World' is an outstanding example of what I mean. The first main section consists entirely of assertions about God and Christ. There is no recognition anywhere that precisely these terms are meaningless, or at least the occasion of the utmost perplexity, to many modern men. I have shown the report to several non-Christian friends and this is the reaction of all of them. I do not, of course, as I said in the article, in the least mean that the Gospel can be presented in the language of science; it is concerned with quite other things than those with which science deals. What disturbs me is the prevailing lack of awareness that there is a problem of communication to be dealt with, as real as the necessity for the missionary learning a foreign language, and the absence of any adequate effort to understand the way in which those who have been brought up outside the Christian tradition, or who have broken with it, react to life".

As things are we fail to be understood, but how then do we set about translating what we have to say? As Dr. Oldham says in his article, it is not a case of trying "to interpret the Gospel in the language of physics or chemistry. That would be an absurdity".

Homo Technicus does not try to express all his concerns in the language of his techniques, but he does sometimes apply his particular concepts to situations where they do not apply. There are indeed "assertions about God and Christ" which convey no meaning to many people nowadays. And it is worse than useless to repeat traditional religious language to them. It may be that in the end we shall all come back to traditional language, but that is in the end; and in the meantime we must find another starting point for conversation with scientific humanists. In such conversations it is generally better to

use one's own halting words to explain old truths. At first it may be useless to go beyond one's own experience, for it is only your and my little bit of personal experience that commands attention. The whole range of Christian life and thought through the centuries means very little to most of our contemporaries in their present condition. That at any rate was my own experience in the days when I was a Humanist.

You cannot present Christianity to "modern man" as a system, deducing the consequences from first principles which have no meaning to him. You must start not from God, but from where we all are. But if you can show without cant and in your own words how Christian principles affect some living situation, some problem of personal estrangement, race relations, a strike, a school or anything else familiar, then you will be heard with attention. We are not yet at the stage of argument. It is useless to try to convince each other. At this stage it will be much if we can convey that we have something to say to each other even if none of us can grasp precisely what that something is. In all arguments it is tempting to put in your "but" too quickly. That is one reason why the Bible tells us to be slow to speak. No arguer listens much to the other side unless he sees that his opponent understands the imponderables, "*les raisons que la raison ne connaît pas*" which underlie his position. If a man listens long and clearly understands you and yet disagrees, you are shaken even if you do not know why he disagrees. If, however, he knocks your arguments down before you get into your stride, you are annoyed but not convinced. So it is far more important for us to understand what the Humanists are after than to tell them what we are after, and I suppose that the converse applies to the Humanists.

Understand them and they will want to understand us, and then we shall both be drawn on to explore a language in which one can say things that are not new in themselves but new to scientific humanism, and new to a great many Church people. The Greeks taught us to think precisely and modern science has shown how to apply rigorously accurate thought to a wide but still limited field. Logic is a wonderful thing and so is scientific method, but they will not do everything that life requires. Both Plato and Aristotle knew this; and when Plato had carried his logic as far as it would go, he tried to express the rest in "myths", that is by thinking in images. In this he came very near to what we now call "Biblical thinking", which is I suspect a mode of thought very natural among mankind and by no means confined to the ancient Hebrews. For instance, many nineteenth

century Russians disliked Europe precisely because our abstractions, our rules and our legality seemed to them unreasonable and inhuman. Their way of thinking was more personal and more concrete. We neo-Greeks, Christian and Humanist alike, have nourished our thought upon abstractions until they have become second nature, but is it not perhaps more in man's nature to think concretely and in images? And to treat the tenses of verbs as a secondary matter? A "modern man" disciplines himself to the demands of abstract reason and logic, but if that dominates his life he will become, as we say, inhuman. In love, in poetry, in religion, he must think in concrete images. He must live in two worlds; and surely that is not so difficult as it is sometimes supposed to be.

The Bultmannists seem to get into great difficulties about, for instance, the Ascension of our Lord. But an occurrence may be quite accurately described in terms of space and time and yet point to consequences which cannot be expressed in spatial or temporal language. So we have indeed a problem of translation, but even the best translators will not be able to communicate some of the most important things unless their hearers will relearn a language which some have forgotten.

But this is not an occasion for throwing stones, for we all live in glass houses. Nothing is further from Biblical imagery than the abstractions and the logic chopping of our own family squabbles among Christians. In our disputes between Churches we have misused our human reason so grossly that we might do well to have a moratorium on all arguments. Our powers of reasoning in this matter are like a tool that is so rusted and notched and bent that it cannot be used without peril until it has been back to the workshop to be reforged. It is important to apply our minds to matters of faith, but there is a time for all things. The experience comes first and then we sit down to think about it. But in our dealings with other Churches we have often used clever arguments to shield ourselves from our experiences which we have no right to refuse. And now there may be many years in front of us when we shall have to learn painfully to accept that unity which we already have and to allow it to sink in. Only then shall we be fit to take up once more the discussion of those things which still separate us.

Compromise and Tension

This year the directors of the German "Evangelical Academies" had their annual meeting in Sweden at the Sigtuna foundation. The

Editor of the CHRISTIAN NEWS-LETTER was invited as a guest of Sigtuna and it was strangely stirring to meet "the ecumenical experience" once more in these new surroundings. As an Anglican I felt spiritually closer to the German Lutherans than I had expected, but intellectually farther apart.

These leaders of the Christian Frontier movement in Germany have to face many problems which are familiar in this country, as well as some problems peculiar to Germany, and they seem to do very much what we do, only more systematically. But their way of thinking about what they do is as different from ours as it could be. The difficulty of language was for me the least part of the difficulty of understanding, and I saw that the loss was mine.

There is no mistaking the spiritual force of the Kirchentag or the Evangelical Academies, and it is something which ought to belong to us too, but the British (or is it only the English?) do not find it easy to take anything German into their system. It is easier to borrow the obscurity or the verbal tricks of German thought than to penetrate its profundity. But if we have much to learn, we have also much to give, and this was brought home to me unexpectedly by some of the heads of the Evangelical Academies in the Eastern Zone of Germany. These are heroic men with heroic wives, not lacking courage to perform the impossible, but sometimes tormented by doubts about what they should do. Their whole training and spiritual ancestry makes them look for answers in black and white, but there is sometimes no "either-or" for them placed as they are to-day.

Many Christians in Eastern Germany cannot find it in their consciences either to accept or to oppose everything in their surroundings. They are not hardened to bad government like the Russians, they lack the Chinese facility for coming to terms with the unreasonable, and they suffer doubly because they feel that there must be a way out. This is the extreme case, but it shows the sort of tension that German Protestants feel in many other fields of life to-day. What we have to offer in these situations is not so much our technique of compromise, but rather our belief that tension can be creative, that there are times when you must accept an apparent contradiction, even to the point when it breaks you.

Ecumenism, An Absurdity?

Just before the Amsterdam Assembly I happened to go to a public dinner addressed by a prominent Roman Catholic publicist. When asked about the World Council of Churches, he said: "Look at the

different starting points of all these people. They disagree with each other on fundamental principles, so obviously nothing much can come of this meeting". On any rational calculation he would have been right to think that the Ecumenical Movement is an absurdity, but the thing which puts out every merely rational calculation about Ecumenism is that it is a movement of the Holy Spirit.

A friend reminds me of the *Basis* of the World Council of Churches adopted in 1948: "The World Council of Churches is a fellowship of Churches which accept our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour". The same friend continues: "This acceptance of a living, sovereign, saving Lord as the One who calls us together is far more important than any 'principles' and than any statements of ours about Him. This was even clearer at Evanston than at Amsterdam: it is not our agreement but our acknowledgment of His call which is our basis". One of the things which shows where the Ecumenical Movement comes from is that it has produced a new type of spirituality. If you have met this once you will recognize it again and you will find it in every church. It is spreading by contagion and sometimes crops up in unlikely places. One never knows just how much of these things there is in the world, but of the depth of ecumenical spirituality there can be no doubt. Everything depends on it. Without prayer, talk about the reunion of the churches is unrealistic, but prayer can change everything, and nothing shows this better than the lives of men like the Abbé Couturier.

The Technique of Ecumenism

I would like to write a little book about the technique of Ecumenism. There are several kinds of meetings between Christians of different Churches and each kind has its own know how. There is one kind of Ecumenical gathering at which you are never sure what will happen; if you give a talk you may have a packed audience with distinguished theologians filling the front rows or you may find yourself talking to a tiny group of students under a tree. It is all very shapeless, but there is time to think, time to talk and time to pray. Worship is at the heart of every day's activity. You have come to meet a certain group of people in an atmosphere of prayer and to wait upon God. And that is what you do.

There are other Ecumenical meetings where every minute seems to be filled with something useful; the speakers are carefully chosen and briefed and they can almost be forgiven if they go on for twice their allotted time. The members of the gathering have all come

long journeys to meet each other, but inevitably—or so it seems—the time is so taken up with business that you do not have time to talk to half of them. Worship has an important place at such meetings but it is not in the centre. You gain more than you could ever say, but yet you go away feeling frustrated that with such people present there was not more encounter. Sometimes there is no excuse for such failures, but it is not so easy when very busy people must get through much necessary business in a limited time. Evanston was such a meeting; Amsterdam was another. It is not easy to organize these gatherings so as to leave enough time for intimate discussion, but it is not impossible. Indeed Amsterdam seems to have succeeded better than Evanston in this respect. It is not always true that you must have a crowded time-table to get through a great volume of business. One of the busiest and most efficient meetings that I have ever attended started with fourteen hours of silence. Moreover some of our business is not quite so urgent as we think it is.

Every meeting reflects the priorities of those who organize it. I cannot think that we always have the right priorities in Ecumenical gatherings, but that is partly our own fault. If we push too many activities on to the Ecumenical Movement and if we are impatient for visible results, we shall have overloaded conferences. The chief reason why we try to crowd too much in is that we rely too much on our own efforts. But we must not do that. If we do we shall soon reduce Ecumenism to absurdity.

J. W. L.

CHRISTMAS GIFTS

A year's subscription to the CHRISTIAN NEWS-LETTER is a popular Christmas present if we may judge by the fact that last year one in ten of our subscribers gave a subscription to the CHRISTIAN NEWS-LETTER as a present to someone. If the recipient is a missionary or a full-time student at school or college, the gift costs only 5s.

What Happened at Evanston

A PERSONAL ASSESSMENT

ELSIE CHAMBERLAIN

What was the result of Evanston? In the nature of things the result is intangible, but it must be said emphatically that the pessimists who prophesied disaster were entirely surprised. It must also be said that the standard of ecumenical thinking and concern was far above that of the average Church, so that new boys felt themselves a little out of breath and sometimes a little out of place. Perhaps the most important lesson is that which is taught by the presence of so much denominational importance—which almost means that no one person matters, except to God.

It was difficult for any one not continuously versed in ecumenical matters to grasp the significance of all the great things that have been happening in the Church since the World Council was formed at Amsterdam in 1948. To take just one instance, Inter-Church Aid now bridges at least in a microscopic measure the great gulf in income between the poorest Christians and the richest Christians in the world, and it was surely a sign of grace that the American Bishop Oxnam, in the opening sermon, pointed out the discrepancy between the average income in the U.S.A. of 1500 dollars a year, and that in India of 25 dollars a year. In things like this Christ was being shown as the Hope of the World.

Yes—but what about the Continental theologians and their other-worldliness? The pessimists believed that this would wreck the Assembly—and possibly the Council itself—when it faced “American Activism”. But in fact those who addressed us from opposing theological camps showed a remarkable agreement to the statement that no part of the Church must claim to be possessed of the whole Truth. Professor Schlink emphasized, as we expected him to do, the Hope that we have in the Second Coming of Christ and the passing away of this world. “If that hope were really alive within us, we would rejoice less in the untroubled existence of our denominations. . . . We would rejoice instead because the Gospel is being preached and men are being saved through faith from the binding ties of this world.”

But Professor Calhoun of Yale, starting from the opposite position, also confessed that “it is perilously easy for us to suppose that the Kingdom of God is our republican form of government”; and he

told us, too, that hard-won mutual confidence takes the place of insecurity and mistrust when theologians from a dozen countries study together for years. The value of their work is shown by the fact that they did convince us that "Hope in Christ" is an inclusive term; Schlink's phrase was "Christ is behind us and before us", and Calhoun warned us that "pre-occupation with 'the present', and refusal to take seriously the significance of 'the end' in its Biblical and Christian sense leads to a distortion". And all that was conveyed in one short week to us who were unprepared by "close companionship and quiet conversation."

The discussions on "work" and our obligation as Christians not to make it the be-all and end-all of existence amused a mere English-woman; I explained that we did not suffer in my country from a passionate devotion to work. But in the discussion we clarified, for ourselves at least, the meaning of the term "vocation". "God calls the whole Church to a life of faith, obedience, service and worship, and every Christian has a vocation in this Biblical sense. This means that our Christian vocation does not necessarily lie in the job itself, but in doing the job as a representative of Christ's Church." The laity, the men and women of our Churches, must be prepared to be Christ's witnesses in all walks of life.

I was tackled on race relations by a young woman from South Carolina who, I thought, had Indian and African blood in her veins. How would she be treated in England? I explained that the Churches I knew might be almost embarrassing in their welcome. I found it hard to believe that any one might literally kick her out of her place if she sat down in a restaurant in her own town. It is only that sort of encounter that makes some of the discussion on inter-group relations real and vital.

The section studying the material on "The Church amid Racial and Ethnic Tensions" sent its report to the Assembly by Dr. Marais of the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa. "There are those who agree that segregation as such is wrong, yet believe that Christian responsibilities may lead us to acknowledge that, while separate Churches for different races are not the right ideal, it may be national policy in certain circumstances". In the name of his section he condemned that attitude. "The Christian", he said, "fundamentally knows only one apartheid, and that is separation from sin."

The final report of this section contains this statement: "The Church cannot approve of any law which discriminates on grounds of race, which restricts the opportunity of any man to acquire education

to prepare himself for his vocation, and to share in the responsibilities and duties of government. Neither can the Church approve any law against racial or ethnic inter-marriage." Dr. Brink, of Johannesburg, said: "We dare not commit our votes against what is being proposed . . . we pledge ourselves to urge our representative Churches to apply themselves as urgently as possible to the study of this report".

It must be exhausting for the patience of those in the vanguard of the movement that every Assembly must have its "new boys" who hold up progress towards the oneness that we agreed was God's purpose. When the ordinary church member shoulders his ecumenical responsibility, when we begin to put in a fraction of the thought and study and prayer that our leaders give to these matters, there will not be this continual brake on the progress towards what we say is Christ's will for His Church.

One discordant note struck in the early stages of the Assembly was the condemnation of those we have labelled "enemies". That our duty to them, our expression of faith in our Gospel, our task as part of the Church, is to pray for them was overlooked; but we lost something of that self-righteousness as we went on. A paragraph from the final message reads: "It is from within this communion that we have to speak about the fear and distrust which at present divide our world. Only at the Cross of Christ, where men know themselves as forgiven sinners, can they be made one. It is there that Christians must pray daily for their enemies. It is there that we must seek deliverance from self-righteousness, impatience and fear."

Canon Oliver Tompkins summed up the situation, created by the tension that exists between our certain unity in Christ and our obvious disunity as Churches, by saying: "It may be that by every standard of human achievement the unity of the Church is an impossible task, and that to think of it is an idle dream. But we are not limited to human achievements. Christ—the Hope of the World—has made us His own, and He is not divided. Men can neither create nor destroy the unity of the Church. To do that belongs to the Lord of the Church alone. We can choose only to deny it or to manifest it. By the Grace of God we have chosen, and so may His Grace fulfil our choice."

"There are many superficial problems which can be solved only by making them profound problems."

William Temple.

Youth and "The European Movement"

KENNETH JOHNSTONE

A few weeks ago I was asked to talk to a group of young people, gathered together from a number of European countries at an old castle in Holland, the subject allotted to me being "The role of Youth in the struggle for a new culture". The assignment was one which might have daunted a Toynbee or a T. S. Eliot, and I should not claim to have been a satisfactory substitute for either or those celebrated men; but the encounter, and particularly the discussions which formed part of it, left me with a good many reflections on the Christian's, and especially the young Continental Christian's, approach to this problem of a "new Europe", and its difference from our own.

It is difficult, perhaps, for an Englishman, even one of the same generation (as I am not) — the generation now in its twenties — to enter fully into the emotions of young Europeans on this subject. The background of experience and feeling is too unlike our own. We emerged from the war battered and exhausted after six years of grim mental strain and some hard physical punishment, but with a great sense of national solidarity and eager to put into action our plans for the reorganization of the State, plans with which the younger generation could and did identify itself to a large extent. In the countries of western Europe (we may except Norway and Denmark and neutral Sweden and Switzerland) the picture was very different. Defeat or occupation or both had marked them deeply and had left behind bewilderment, rancour and unrest. Even in Holland and Belgium which reverted at once to a familiar and still respected constitutional past, and in the case of Belgium at least to a remarkable degree of prosperity, there were anxieties and dissensions. In Holland the loss of the greater part of the colonial empire, with all that that loss meant to the patriotic pride and to the wealth and economic structure of the nation; in Belgium the inflamed differences between the Flemish and the Walloon elements of the nation and the unhappy *question royale* were sources of strife and discontent. But the position of the three major western countries, France, Germany and Italy, was much worse, not merely because of the physical, political and economic

ravages of war — although these were terrible enough — but because the whole of the recent past of the nation, the nationalist dictatorships in Germany and Italy, the Third Republic in France, was discredited and disowned.

A natural result of this was that the generation identified, actively or passively, with that past also to a large extent lost credit in the eyes of its successors. This loss was not wholly repaired by the emergence of "untainted" older leaders like Dr. Adenauer or the late Signor De Gasperi and it was in many cases emphasized by the voluntary self-abasement of the conscience-stricken older generation before the young, an abdication often touching in its sincerity but sometimes pernicious in its effects. Moreover, in no country of Europe except Yugoslavia (and there in a very special context and for very special reasons) did political power pass into the hands of those groups who might above all others have claimed to have been pure of the discredited past and who might have appealed to the imagination of youth, namely the leaders of the liberation or resistance movements. The chief reasons for this were, first, that these movements were in fact coalitions of widely different groups and individuals held together only by the dangers and emotions of war and bound to fall apart after victory; secondly, the Communist attempts to claim the whole credit for the resistance, although unsuccessful in their aim of lifting the Communists into power on a wave of national gratitude, did effectively prevent any other group from giving a political focus to this particular national emotion; and lastly, good resistance leaders do not any more than good fighter pilots or good commandos necessarily possess the qualities and experience most needed for the task of political reconstruction.

Too Rigid?

In this atmosphere of disintegration and confusion it is not to be wondered at if the basic feeling of European youth has been one of bewilderment and homelessness, expressing itself according to temperament in any one of a number of typical attitudes, helpless passivity, sour indifference, scornful dissociation, a cynical concentration on immediate interest, or the enthusiastic search for a panacea. Undoubtedly the movement for a "new Europe" has caught the imagination of many of the more positive spirits, with results both good and bad. It has provided some concrete proposals which can be made the objects of work and hope, and the fact that many

of its chief advocates are men already of age and political experience like Spaak, André Philip, Ehlers and Patijn, has done much to bridge that gap between the generations alluded to above. On the other hand, it has also attached the hopes of youth to a political programme which may have been too highly detailed, and therefore too inflexible, to fit the international facts. An experiment has tended to harden too soon into a doctrine or so it appears to British eyes. The plans, not so much for E.D.C. as for a supra-national European authority, inspired in young Europeans a hope which came to many of them as a rescue from a sea of despair. If this rescue fails because the lifeboat was too rigidly constructed, its occupants may drown. Is it too late to tranship into some safer vessel?

The question of common defence arrangements for Europe is certainly an important part of the European scheme and its urgency is clear; but to supporters of the European movement it is by no means the heart of the matter. It is only one aspect of the formal unification of Europe which they desire, and it can be, and now no doubt may be, solved without recourse to a merger of European sovereignties. This separation of the problem of defence from the deeper constitutional problem may well in the end prove to be a blessing, since the haste required in solving the one may have prejudiced the solution of the other. Lasting unions between communities and states can only be based on unity of sentiment and unity of interest. Where these are not present formal union cannot supply the lack of them, as the history of the Scandinavian kingdoms and the history of the Low Countries have clearly shown even in the last hundred and thirty years. Both these unities take time to grow and they need devoted cultivation. Neither is fully achieved in Europe yet. The advocates of "new Europe" claim that they never will be achieved until at least a group of European nations takes the plunge, surrenders part of its national sovereignty to some central supra-national organization and shows that it is possible to swim by actually getting into the water. That is certainly true in the long run, but the hesitation of France (originally the leader of this movement) shows that the time is not ripe yet for such a drastic step. It has of course been clear all along that Britain was not prepared for heroic action of this kind. Have our European friends been trying to hurry too fast and are they in danger of having hurried along with them too many enthusiastic European youth, whose hopes have been encouraged only to be left unfulfilled?

What seems to be needed most at the present moment is some assurance to these young people that the momentary check, or even the collapse, of a given plan is not a final disaster. For Christians it should be easier to see this than for secular Utopians, however high-minded. It is a question of perspective. With all its virtues there is in some of these youthful idealisms a discontent which is not at all divine, ranging from an assurance that only the future (under an enlightened new management) is worth bothering about to a bitter self-pity at having been born into a world so deplorably out of joint. In between these two extremes there is an abundance of genuine and warm-hearted desire for closer international fellowship, which, lacking of necessity any basis of practical political experience, rallies readily to generous appeals without realizing how long and painful any process of radical change must be and how even the noblest of programmes must adapt itself to realities.

If we are to become good Europeans, we have not only the future to consider, but the past and the present as well. Commenting on the famous sentence from Rousseau's *Social Contract*: "Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains", Lord Morley said "It is nearer the mark, so far at any rate as the civilized European of to-day is concerned, to say that he is born two thousand years old. That is what history would mean to our plain man, if he had time and patience to meditate beyond the hour". In Europe, of all regions of the world, we should be able to draw strength from the past — not from a sentimental recollection of lost splendours, but from a consideration of the ways in which political forces do in fact operate and political constructions are in fact built to last, as well as from a serious attention to the great achievements of the European mind, which have as much to tell us now as they had when they were first brought forth.

Are We Unique?

But the main service which history can render us is to shatter the illusion of our own uniqueness. Reading or listening to much modern commentary, one would imagine that the world had never been in straits till now. It may well be that we have now in our possession the means to destroy mankind more completely than ever before; but that does not make the whole of the past irrelevant. There are no new starts in history. If we look back along the centuries of human development, we can put our troubles

into a better perspective. They can give us both humility and hope. We can see that the world has seldom been wisely governed and that even in the most favoured ages, if we regard them closely enough, there have been social injustices, physical hardships and torments, agonies of doubt and fear, no less than those which we have to suffer to-day. It was no less terrible to live in fear of destruction by Attila or the Northmen or the plague than it is to live in fear of destruction by the hydrogen bomb. Our emphasis on our own dangers is really a kind of pride. We patronize the past or dismiss it as irrelevant because in certain material directions we have advanced beyond it. We do not see that it can still offer us hope and counsel and strength, above all the counsel that even in an age of speed it still takes time for anything worthwhile to grow.

Of course the situation of our age is unique. So is the situation of any age. But there is a human fellowship between past and present, as between human generations, which was not meant to be broken. Past generations needed a future (which, Heaven help us, is us) and each generation, if it is not to be rootless, needs a past. In Europe we are fortunate in the depth and richness of the soil from which we grow. Only if we have understood the past, which like all things human is only understood through love, can we serve our own generations, and only by coming to grips with the problems of our own day can we serve a future which we are often too ready to make an excuse for some of the shadier things we do.

In this country it is said of us that we have come to terms with the past. We rest on it so comfortably that we take it for granted. We therefore find it all the harder to understand those who have been violently uprooted from their own past, or even to understand what it is they lack. This great secret of the strength of continuity, and the wise willingness to move slowly in great matters, are as much as any physical strength, the qualities which make Europe long for British participation in European affairs to-day. In particular, young Europeans visiting this country feel something of a stability they have lost, or hold precariously, at home. We can do much for the younger generation of Europe if we can make them feel the true pulse of human history, which is their own no less than ours, and persuade them that if they will only take time, if they will listen to the past as well as keenly study the facts of the present, there is a future worth building for us all.

Letters from Evanston

These extracts from private letters to the Editor of the CHRISTIAN NEWS-LETTER and his friends do not give a balanced or consistent picture of the Assembly of the World Council of Churches at Evanston. It will be about a year before we shall be able to assess the importance of this second Assembly. In the meantime these letters give some immediate impressions of some of those who were there. Our correspondents are of all ages, both sexes and many churches. They are all British.

General Impressions

"I could be enthusiastic and give the highlights but that would be frivolously irresponsible. I could be despairing and produce plenty of evidence to justify despair, but that would be equally unbalanced. I could be disillusioned and there's plenty to disillusion, but that would be a sinful denial of the Holy Spirit. But what to say I just do not see."

"At the time it was all rather overwhelming . . . Evanston was nevertheless a most wonderfully inspiring experience."

"My main impression was not that it was an exciting or inspiring conference but that there was a steadiness and soundness about it."

"In the second Assembly the World

Council has gained not lost momentum."

"The pace is terrific. Two worship services and three sessions and always this means three different locations. I am struck by the contribution made by the Orthodox, who seem to be here in sufficient force to make their views felt . . . All our ages are published in the list of delegates. So illuminating! . . . There is one Anglo-Catholic priest here who won't even come to the Methodist Church for our worship . . . So good that he is even here."

"Many Christians found at Evanston for the first time that depth of Christian fellowship which is the raw material of the movement for Christian unity and co-operation."

The Place

Nearly all correspondents like Evanston but disliked the McGaw Hall where the plenary sessions were held.

"Evanston is a delightful spot."

"The McGaw Hall . . . is like a dressed-up aeroplane hangar with bad acoustics."

"One of the most happy memories of the Assembly will be the way in which the inhabitants of Evanston went to all lengths to help the Assembly and its members. It is said that there were no less than 600 volunteers with cars to help the delegates on arrival."

"The cafés at Amsterdam were fruitful places for ecumenical contacts;

no such opportunities were to be found in Evanston. Delegates were divided into three main groups for eating, and each had to stay in his own hall for the purpose unless he were able to engineer a 'swop' with someone else for a particular meal. This meant in fact that one was virtually cut off from two-thirds of the conference for normal contacts. The hall where the meetings were held, moreover, had no foyers or other attached places where it was possible to talk in a congenial atmosphere."

What is the Assembly for?

The following quotation puts some questions which were asked by more than one correspondent:

"The Central Committee will have to consider several major questions before the planning of the 1960 Assembly is undertaken. Is the *primary* emphasis to be on the Assembly as an assembly discussing theological, social and evangelistic problems, entering into a real ecumenical conversation and seeking together to come to a fuller knowledge of the Truth, or it is to be on the Assembly as an educational and inspirational force to the general run of Churchpeople in the country where it is meeting? It was probably inevitable and right that in the first great ecumeni-

cal gathering in U.S.A. the emphasis should have been largely on the latter. But that educative function of the Assembly did mean loss on the consultative and 'ecumenical encounter' side of its work. The hall was too big for effective debate—imagine the House of Commons in the Empress Hall, Earl's Court! . . . There were moments when it was difficult not to feel we were being sacrificed in the arena to make a Chicago holiday! Surely the answer is separate meetings sometimes for the general public as well as for the Accredited Visitors."

Hope

"On the main theme, the Christian Hope, it is striking and curious that the strongest statements have come out incidentally in other sections dealing with race or international relations or evangelism rather than directly in the statement and discussion on the main theme itself.

"The original statement on the Christian Hope prepared for the Assembly received much more strong criticism than did the statements prepared on the various sections. I think there was general agreement that the original statement was theorizing about hope rather than giving a message or proclamation of hope. The advisory commission which studied the main theme had a more stormy time in the plenary debate; . . . At the same time, when the final reports appear, it would be possible to compile an interesting and strong anthology of statements on the Christian hope from amongst the speeches and reports on the distress and need of the world.

"Negatively, this means that the theological discussion of the Christian hope did not sufficiently take into account and speak hope to the real distress of men, amid refugees, mass poverty, fears of war, etc. Positively one might say that it is in the 'existential' situation of despair, rather than in theoretic discussion that hope becomes a reality."

"I think it will be generally agreed that our best work was done in connexion with the six commissions.

"By contrast, the group discussions on the main theme 'Christ—the Hope of the World' were in my view not so successful. This was in part due to the cleavage of opinion between the 'Continental' and the 'American' schools of thought, which persisted to the end. But I think it was also in part due to the method. We had in our hands the final report of the Advisory Commission, but we were advised that we could not amend that. We had no working papers, nor were we required to produce any written document at the end. In

such circumstances it was fatally easy for people to rest content with a re-statement of their traditional position. It was this failure of method which resulted in the club-footed statement on the main theme, which no one, I think, was really satisfied about. Many would have liked to see Bishop Nygren's

motion passed that we should scrap it altogether.

"The lesson is clear to me that ecumenical encounter takes place best when people of different traditions have a specific job to do, a statement before them to consider and to amend."

Encounter

"Perhaps the main value of an Assembly like this is in the 'encounter' rather than in its speeches or reports. Part of that encounter is the meeting of theological study and secular need of 'Faith and Order' and 'Life and Work'. There has been in the Assembly a very valuable meeting of people from widely different backgrounds, 'speaking the Truth in love' to one another. It has

been most valuable to hear Africans saying what race issues seem from their point of view, and saying also what they feel about conditions of labour in Africa."

"The presence of the Iron Curtain delegates was the greatest enrichment of the Assembly and their contribution is reflected very specially in both 'Social Questions' and 'International Affairs.'"

Dangers and Criticisms

"The alarming growth in the strength of confessionalism, which is fundamentally defensive and not generous in spirit. There is, I believe, a real danger that the pursuit of unity will come in practice to be limited to an attempt to advance on a broad front heading in the same direction but not attempting anything more. Amsterdam had to overcome centuries of inertia. A new kind of inertia could very easily supervene—contentment with what has been achieved and unwillingness to take another step. Quite frankly I think the theologians are bogged down and the ecclesiastical 'machine minders' are frightened that any further development

might become really uncomfortable!"

"We really are still too diverse for fruitful debate within a short time . . . We are caught in the clouds—a premature eschatology."

"The way the Americans draw politics into everything."

"What rather staggers one is the weight of activities now being carried by W.C.C."

The following quotation summarises a criticism made by many:

"The programme in general was overloaded . . . Much of the time was taken up with formal speeches which did not always reach a standard which justified their inclusion."

Worship

"Worship as usual was one of the moving and helpful parts of the Assembly—except that once again we were faced with our divisions at the one place

where we ought to be united. It's difficult to assess this, but I have been feeling that we are moving a bit here. I hope so."

"At such an Assembly the worship is a vital part of the whole. But a programme which puts the morning worship at 8.30 a.m. and the evening worship at 10.10-10.30 p.m. is leaving people too little time to sleep. A tired Assembly cannot do its work well and there is no doubt that with the heat and the bus-rides and the constant mental alertness that was demanded there were many who were very weary towards the end."

"There were services of the different denominations but unfortunately not many people from other denominations attended them."

"Sharing with that Ecumenical congregation in the Church of South India liturgy was an amazing experience. During the past ten years I have attended many Communion services at Ecumenical gatherings and always felt a sense of guilt—either because I communicated or because I did not, or because of the

consciousness of my share in 'our unhappy divisions'. There has always been the further distraction of feeling impelled to notice whether this Bishop or that Moderator was present and whether he did or did not share fully in the actual service; inevitably the aftermath was miserable and even agonizing. On this occasion none of these outside factors got in the way at all. I think all present took part—I neither know nor care."

"I found the celebration of Communion according to the rite of the Church of South India the most moving and valuable experience of the whole fortnight. The liturgy itself repays the most serious study. I regretted that so few of those at Evanston who were suspicious of the South Indian approach to reunion were present at this service. A great opportunity was thereby lost of observing what God is doing with His Church."

The Orthodox Churches

"Professor Florovsky's depressing speech which can be summarized as a determined summons to remain in disunity . . . the intransigence of the Orthodox Church, its refusal to regard other churches as in any real sense churches at all."

"One of the best features of the Assembly was the active part played by the Orthodox delegations. They issued two separate statements, one on the group discussions and one on the Faith and Order paper. It is a tradition among the officials of the World Council that such separate statements are to be deplored, but this tradition is very much

open to question. The issue of such statements has two distinct advantages: first the Orthodox by them are officially engaged in the discussions of the Assembly; and second, this is the only way in which the delegates from other Churches can learn of the Orthodox point of view. The section meeting discussions are for the most part too diffuse for an Orthodox view to be coherently presented in a way which those not familiar with it will understand. Moreover the Orthodox attitude is so much a whole in itself that in many respects it can only be expressed in such statements as these . . ."

International Affairs and Race Relations

"Many of the best things from Evanston seem to me to be in the Reports of the six Sections . . . 'International

Questions', my own Section, seemed to me to be too like the kind of thing the UNO might well produce without much

help from Evanston. I wonder if there isn't a danger that the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs is so much in the universe of ideas of UNO that it fails to look, at least at times, as irrelevant as it ought to look to the non-Christian. Maybe I'm too hard on my own Section which so frequently seemed to me platitudinous in its observations and resolves. I think the Inter-Group Report (on race relations) packs more dynamite to the square inch than any other document in this field."

"Group V produced a document of great power . . . Clause 21 reads for example:

"When we are given Christian insight, the whole pattern of racial discrimination is seen as an unutterable offence against God to be endured no longer so that the very stones cry out."

"When the report came before the Assembly there were one or two mild protests against the language of the report. But the Assembly refused to tamper with it."

Evanstoniana

"I am trying to collect stories of the Assembly. One is to the effect that a youth consultant, a girl of about 20, went up to a group of professors and theologians and said: 'I want to introduce myself as a woman in the street'. . . In Marshall Field, the largest department store here, large texts from

the Bible have been placed in some of the departments . . . St. Matthew vii, 6, is used to advertise coat-hangers and moth-balls. The quotation is: 'Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you'.

What Next?

"The Holy Spirit might well be the theme of the next Assembly."

"My impression was that while it is now proven that the World Council of Churches is essential to the life of the churches in this day and age and is one step further towards unity in one Lord, very little, if any, understanding of how to tackle the problem of communication exists in Ecumenical circles, which tend to develop to a formal pattern.

"We must answer the 'anticipators'

who pose questions about what Evanston was all about. The answers need to be given in words and actions that are a reality and relevant to the ordinary daily experience of living in the world. I had the unhappy feeling that while some sections of the Assembly programme were completely practical, in the accepted meaning of the word, the anticipation of the American people nearby was dulled by not being able to understand what they could do about it afterwards in their churches."

Life in Communist China

MARGARET KIESOW

I left China in September 1953, after five years' service as an educational missionary. My last year was spent as the leader of a "pedagogical group", teaching chemistry in a large Communist medical college. Though still employed by an English missionary body, I was no longer a member of a missionary community. With my Chinese relatives and my infant son, I lived the life of the people around me—a life I believe to be typical of institutional life in a developing Communist society. It was an experience I should like to pass on.

When one is actively joining in the life of a working group behind the bamboo curtain, it is surprising how easily one can be changed from a critical observer to an energetic fellow-traveller. During this last year in China, the only news we received from outside came through comments in personal letters and from occasional copies of *The British Weekly*. Our information normally came from the Chinese newspapers, Peking radio, English language journals of Communist countries and the various magazines put out by Communist parties in Britain, the U.S.A., India, etc. All these publications take the Communist view of history for granted. Through every news and feature article, directly or indirectly, one absorbs the myth that Communism is pressing forward to its inevitable triumph over capitalism, imperialism and Western democracy. One is continually taught to think of the rulers of the U.S.A. as the greatest enemies of mankind. They are classified as Nazis. Either the U.S.A. herself, or her chief satellite, Great Britain, may be relied on to do her best to squash any movement towards freedom especially in colonial countries. Even economic aid to undeveloped countries is just a Wall Street device to keep them in economic slavery. Russia, China and the People's Democracies are, of course, represented as the complete antithesis of the U.S.A. and her satellites. Only in the Communist block are the motives of mutual aid truly altruistic. These countries are progressive, and, above all, they are successful. The headlines in the Chinese newspapers, when the Korean war ended, read, "Great Victory of the People's Volunteers!"

The "people" of the U.S.A. and Britain are represented as the unwilling victims of their governments' warmongering policy. As their Communist parties are small, the people have little influence over their governments' actions, which are controlled entirely by the interests

of big business. Owing to the armaments drive, living standards are rapidly falling. The people are also demoralized by Hollywood films, which treat entirely of sex and violence, and by bad newspapers and light literature. The children's minds are poisoned by comics, which glorify violence and crime, and by an educational system which teaches competition rather than co-operation. It is small wonder then, that such people commit ghastly atrocities against the brave People's Fighters in Korea and Malaya, and even stoop to bacterial warfare.

Did we believe it?

Did we really believe all this? On the bacterial warfare issue we took the view of a Chinese acquaintance who said, "I can't believe they have dropped bacteria, but they must have dropped *something*!" The photographic exhibition of evidence did not convince us, but the seriousness with which we ourselves were expected to carry out our anti-bacterial warfare preparations and training exercises made us wonder whether there was, perhaps, something in it. It was this propaganda *in action*, reinforcing the spoken and written word, combined with the silencing of all voices from the other side, which gradually tended to mould our thoughts and lives into the Communist pattern. The patriotic slogans began to slip off our tongues as easily as they slipped off those of our neighbours. "We are working to liberate mankind! We are the great camp of peace and democracy, striving to build a happy future for all our children! Can a small sacrifice of personal freedom or comfort stand in the way of this great aim? No! Our nation needs personnel! Let us cultivate our bodies and minds—to work! And the enemies of peace and democracy, the enemies of 'the people' must take full responsibility for their actions!"

Is it worth it? Is the sacrifice of personal and intellectual freedom really bringing better standards to millions? I never knew the old China, so I can only compare the order of 1953 with the chaos of 1948, when the Nationalist regime was collapsing. From my limited experience, I consider there has been some slight general improvement in conditions of nutrition, clothes and housing, and considerable improvement amongst the very poor. The stability of the currency is a continual source of amazement after the years of uncontrolled inflation. Startling progress has been made in public services, hygiene and medical and educational facilities. In the Communist view, the work of a rickshaw coolie is not fitting for a man. Rickshaws are fast being replaced by pedicabs (bicycle taxicabs), and more slowly by buses. We saw slum clearance and road building programmes carried out. Public places,

such as the lake and park, were cleaned and tidied, and there were new facilities for entertainment, such as boats we could hire at a small charge and row ourselves. New buildings included halls for political meetings, a cinema, maternity hospital, workmen's rest home, technical college, barracks and estates of workers' houses. Most remarkable to European eyes was the improvement in public hygiene. We happened to be under house arrest while the hygiene campaign was in progress, and when we were once more free to walk around the town we found a real difference. Everywhere there was evidence of sweeping and white-washing. Main roads were provided with spittoons with lids. There was a remarkable absence of flies, and public conveniences were no longer objectionable. In a restaurant we found a bowl of permanganate solution in the centre of the table, in which to sterilize our chopsticks, and on the walls were coloured pictures vividly depicting the life histories of internal parasites. Sometimes the hygiene was more a show than a reality, as when a barber, about to shave my husband, discussed to his admiring customers the sterilization of the razor in an alcohol flame—and then stropped it on his dirty old strop! Nevertheless, in 1952 China became, and still is, hygiene conscious.

It is worth noting how the Communists carry out this kind of reform. According to occupation or neighbourhood, the whole population is divided into small groups. Through these groups, by way of energetic government officials, the orders for hygiene, anti-bacterial warfare preparations, anti-corruption and other campaigns are received and carried out. Campaigns usually start with public meetings, at which every group is represented, and then enter the practical stage. In the hygiene campaign, for instance, the use of D.D.T. and sprays (made in China and readily available), and the purpose of inoculations were explained. We were then given a form to pin on the wall. Down one side was a list of insects, flies, fleas, mosquitos, bed-bugs, etc., and there were columns for us to fill in the number we killed each week. During the summer danger season, our rooms were frequently inspected by the public health visitors, who then awarded us a suitable label to be fixed outside—mauve for clean or very clean and yellow for dirty. They also vaccinated us in our home and told us where to go for inoculations, which were also made in China. At the office, a period each week was reserved for cleaning, and similar inspections took place. One of the purposes of this campaign was probably to break down the abhorrence of "dirty" work formerly held by higher-class Chinese. Much has been achieved, but in this, as in other fields, still more remains to be done.

In a Communist society, few are too old or too young to study. Study implies first and foremost political study, the study of Marxism, as interpreted by Stalin and Mao, and its application to everyday life. One hour each day of the six-day week is normally devoted to this, while the Saturday afternoon political rally should be regarded as the inspiration of the week. Vocational study, a means to increased efficiency, is also included. In a rapidly expanding economy, promotion comes rapidly to those who apply themselves, particularly if their ideology is correct. Vocational study includes Russian, essential to the study of Marxism and of science, as Russian text-books are considered more reliable than those of the West, and not many translations are yet available. Opportunity for this further vocational training is usually provided at the place of work in evening classes. China's illiterate population has also been drawn into the education drive. A so-called quick method has been devised for learning and remembering the complex Chinese characters, and time and opportunity for lessons are given to all who are willing to learn. My hairdresser, for instance, told me with pride that he hoped soon to graduate from the primary school classes, which he attended for two hours each day, and to enter a middle school course. The government spends liberally on the provision and equipment of schools and colleges. Simple apparatus is made in China, but precision instruments are obtained from Europe. The electrical analytical balance which I assembled just before I left the college came from Western Germany. Early this year I was shown an exactly similar model in this country. It had just been acquired by the Pharmacy School where I received my training, and was amongst the most prized possessions of the Chemistry Department.

The government does its best to provide facilities for progress in education, medicine, agriculture and industry, and it expects them to be used to good advantage. Work is one of the five things Communist children are taught to love, and adult behaviour must bear this out. In the "pedagogical group", which consisted of myself as lecturer with three assistants, we were required to work as a group. Several weeks before the beginning of term we met to allocate the various tasks, which included that of liaison between us and our students, store-keepers and the administration. Our teaching programme was prepared in advance and circulated to other groups concerned, thus avoiding repetitions and omissions. At the beginning of each week we held a meeting to discuss the week's work in detail, trying to foresee difficulties which we or our students were likely to encounter. We also

discussed the work of the previous week, noting the criticisms which had been received on the appropriate form from the students and the administration. We then made a record, for future reference, of our achievements and mistakes, mentioning where time or material had been wasted. In addition, one week towards the end of each term was spent in a special investigation campaign. A list of topics submitted by the administration, including every aspect of our work, was discussed in all our non-teaching time, including evenings, and we finally wrote our report. The students carried out a similar campaign at the same time. The administration modified its educational policy on the findings obtained, as we, personally and as a group, tried to remedy the faults which had been revealed. The administration itself was subject to criticism, a special period during the year being devoted to group meetings to consider the efficiency of the various administrative and service departments. At such meetings, one could not question anything which was regarded as a Communist principle; but this did not prevent lively and useful criticism of everyday working methods. We were also required to make our individual weekly programme of work, including attendance at meetings, evening classes, private study and newspaper reading. Most people in our office set themselves a sixty-hour week, but many were criticized for aiming too high and endangering their principal function, their teaching.

“Free Activity”

In spite of the emphasis on work and study, there is still time for recreation. Indeed, our institutional programme included one hour before the evening meal for “free activity”, which took the form of ball or board games, country or ballroom dancing, or community singing of patriotic songs. In the evening there was often a group visit to the cinema, where Chinese films and Russian films dubbed in Chinese were regularly shown. Technically, these films were very good, but their stories tended to become monotonous, since they had always to be a vehicle for propaganda. They were, however, free from unhealthy sex interest and any glorification of personal violence. There was also the traditional Chinese theatre, a very popular attraction. At the weekend there were visits to places of historic interest, beauty spots, exhibitions and museums. (Chinese art treasures are now officially valued and preserved for public inspection.) Sport was taken very seriously. The provincial athletic meetings were held in our town, and we were given time off in relays to attend. Sitting on the concrete steps which provided the only seating accommodation around

the arena, I watched a long-distance event won by a former rickshaw coolie. The most popular game was basket ball, which needs very little equipment, while most able-bodied people were expected to join in the public early morning exercises. Instead of the old Chinese lunar festivals, we were taught to look forward to Labour Day and to the festival of the founding of the state, in October. These occasions were celebrated with all-day parades and processions, in which thousands participated while millions watched. The parade day was followed by a holiday, in which one could rest one's weary feet, and perhaps go out in the evening to see the decorated streets, or dance beside the lake in the intervals of watching the aquatic fireworks.

Is there any time left for religion? The state, of course, hopes there is not, for Communism should make religion unnecessary. Officially, however, Christianity, Mohammedanism and Buddhism are recognized, and believers may attend their chosen place of worship, provided they have no more important duty imposed by the community. Thus the congregation at our church consisted mainly of housewives with their younger children, and elderly people. Our services continued in the characteristic style of the English Baptist tradition. The only innovation was a type of communal prayer in which every member of the congregation prayed his own prayer, at the same time, out loud. This was not pandemonium. We all started together, quietly. Gradually the movement reached a climax, and then slowly died away, being followed by a moment of impressive silence before the minister pronounced the amen. When I got used to it I found this type of prayer very helpful. The ordinary services were an inspiration to all who took part, but on special occasions a visiting, important clergyman would sometimes give us a good dose of Communist politics in our sermon. These sermons stressed the fact that the Chinese church was a new church, free from missionary and imperialist domination, self-administrative, self-supporting and self-propagating. Self-propagation is not an easy task. The Christian hospitals, schools and colleges have all been taken over by the state, and no longer provide a channel for Christian evangelism; Sunday schools still function, but the children who attend them are subjected to anti-religious teaching at day school. New ministers are still trained at the union theological colleges at Peking and Nanking, but the number of students is small compared with the millions who have never heard the Gospel. We should be thankful that Bibles are still being printed at Shanghai.

For some Christians the conflict between duty to the state and duty to God is a continuous agony. They must say and do things which

they know to be wrong, or face disgrace and unemployment. The guide for daily life cannot be Christianity: it must be Marxism. Some Christians find the struggle too much for them and give up their Christianity. Others succeed in reconciling Christianity and Communism. Still others continue the struggles: they are the living martyrs.

It is all too easy to silence reason and begin to think of Communism as a handmaid of Christianity. Communist activities are always made to appear so plausible, and are so effective. Communist campaigns have succeeded in bringing a new moral standard to China, a standard of personal and corporate honesty which puts "Christian" England to shame. Petty crime is rare, and lost articles are handed over to the police and returned to the claimant with a warning. No one would think of taking stationery, food, or other property of his employer (often the state) for his personal use. Business dealings are expected to be equally honest. The chief deterrent is not fear, but the feeling that knocking off, sharp dealing, etc., is just not done now. Communist morality puts the Party, the State and the People first. All personal and family considerations are selfish in comparison. Of course, many Chinese do not accept these new standards, and many more who appear to accept them occasionally let drop a remark which reveals that their change is only skin deep. The almost complete absence of rebellion, or even open complaint, may be attributed to many causes. In my opinion the chief factor is the moral force of the thousands of young Communist evangelists, who distribute their Marxist leaven into nearly every group into which that vast community is divided. Will it leaven the whole lump? We should not forget that the Christian leaven, present in even smaller amount, is also working there. Only God knows what the final synthesis will be, but Western Christians should not ignore the challenge of this tremendous experiment.

"To be the inheritors of a great tradition gives men heroism and it gives them blindness of heart."

Charles Gore.

The Worker-Priests

PIERRE BUNGENER

The worker-priests in France were not innovators, upholders of a new and daring doctrine. Their movement was not an institution, but rather, as Cardinal Feltin has said, *an experiment*. Within the framework of missions and fraternities attempting to approach the French working-class world—a closed world almost completely impervious to classical methods of evangelization—a few priests most of whom were deprived of the support of a parish community, tried to become an integral part of the proletariat by sharing the daily lives and destiny of the workers.

Those priests were not very many, only about one hundred in all. They included members of the Mission de Paris and Mission de France, Jesuits, Capuchins, Franciscans, Dominicans, Assumptionists and also several vicars who, although attached to a parish, had felt the urge of a closer contact with the people. These men, although they all abandoned the cassock, were not united by any particular theological doctrine. "From the very start", one of them said as early as 1947, "we realized that first we must completely adopt our new milieu, and only afterwards see what we can do in it."

Indeed, all they knew at the beginning was their love for the disinherited, and they officiated among the poor and the uprooted, who are prepared to cluster around any solid support that is offered to them. They felt themselves commandos landing on a territory which has to be conquered. But what they found was a whole world of workers with its own structure and militant organization, whose claims were understandable and often justifiable. Thus, just as their own mission was beginning to take shape, the worker-priests, almost without realizing it themselves, found themselves standing side by side with the workers in their battle in the trade union field, taking part in strikes and street demonstrations beside the Communists. Certainly in accepting them the priests seemed to have passed too easily beyond the limit. But those who reproached them for doing this did not appreciate their motives, and refused to see that their action was based on genuine faith.

The Church is so closely bound up with the historical society which has created the proletariat that it has seldom been capable of a critical judgment of the institutions of that society. Hence its anxiety and

apprehensions: the worker-priests questioned too much. They were calling for an extraordinarily free Church which would accept the dogma without ever being trammelled by it, and it was difficult to see how such a Church could be made to return to the traditional road. Of course, the worker priests still spoke of God and Christ, of sin and grace, but most of all they spoke of love. Often they did not baptize, and showed great tolerance, or at least understanding, of their comrades' problems. Thus the priest who earned the quaint nickname of Père Pigalle, friend of the prostitutes, who spent his nights, in complete serenity, in the bars of Montmartre.

On the other hand, these men remained outside the political system of Rome, a system which, we must say, does actively exist. They were trade unionists, but they accused the Christian trade unions of being afraid of a genuine transformation of the social structure. Likewise, the Vatican's support of a systematically anti-Communist, if not pro-American policy—through the Christian Democrats in Italy, through Adenauer in Germany, or the M.R.P. in France—could not fail to oppose it to the worker-priests who had made a different choice.

However, the main argument used by the authorities at Rome against the worker-priest lay on another plane. It was first formulated by Cardinal Liennart, and later taken up by the entire Roman Catholic press and in episcopal letters: "To be a priest and to be a worker are two distinct functions, two different ways of life which cannot be merged in one person without altering the notion of priesthood. A priest devotes his life to God and to the service of the souls. A worker performs temporal tasks. These two functions cannot be fused."

However, that explanation was given after the event and constituted an attempt to justify the attitude of Rome. It would be easy to show its insufficiency by pointing out that the Roman Catholic Church tolerates priest-industrialists, priest-journalists, or teachers, politicians and officers. In France, we can mention Admiral Thierry d'Argenlieu or Canon Kirr, Maire of Dijon.

Admittedly, the worker-priests are not above criticism. In particular their interpretation of the struggle in which most of them accepted to take part corresponded to a Marxist rather than to a Christian vision of the world. They accepted class-consciousness as an effective weapon of the emancipation of the proletariat. They put their trust in means which are hardly compatible with priesthood, and the letter they published immediately after their condemnation was written in a tone more suitable for political battles than for an ecclesiastical debate.

The worker-priests said, in substance: "If to be a Christian means to love the poor, it follows that Christ is on the left in politics" (*le Christ est à gauche*). But Communism and progressism, which through their trade union activity the worker-priests have been led to accept, if not to support, is not exactly an involvement with the poor. Poverty is indeed manifest in every worker—but not in all of those who belong to organized movements and have achieved some power. And to affirm that going to the people demands that we accept the people as it is, with its background of class war and its hopes of political redemption, is rather like affirming that in order to approach a sinner we must accept sin.

It does not seem to us, however, that this error was of decisive importance. In France the social gulf is such that what matters most is to have crossed it. Trust was reviving. People were saying: "We see now that a man can belong to the Church without being tied to capitalism or to political reaction".

The measures of condemnation took place in the period between September 1953, when the alarm was sounded, and February 1954, when they became final, and the Bishops were given a few months to apply them. The final step was the removal of the leading Dominicans who had supported or encouraged the movement. By that time, thanks to the skilful timing of the Roman authorities who had waited for the first wave of public sympathy to subside before completely revealing their intentions, the case was already judged.

The public were surprised to see how quickly the majority of worker-priests submitted to the measures taken against them. They had too much respect for Church doctrine to contemplate even for a moment cutting themselves off from the Roman Catholic Church. One had also expected more resistance from the French clergy who on the whole were well aware of the stakes involved. But they bowed their heads at once, as though the best way to obey is with one's eyes shut. By this submission the Roman Catholic Church in France has withdrawn from a mission field and lost the opportunity of a reform, and believing that it has saved the situation it has deleted with a stroke of the pen the results achieved by the labours of some of its best servants. God only knows whether it will ever be able to resume the dialogue with the people which the worker-priests had begun.

A Welsh Mining Village

ERASTUS JONES

The Christian Frontier passes through the Welsh mining valley in which I minister; my people and I find our frontier in the local terms of coal, National Coal Board, National Union of Mineworkers and Communism. I had no previous intimate experience of industry when I came here, and it was far too light-heartedly that I ventured to tackle the demands of the frontier situation. I now work, however, with full seriousness, and count the cost before each new step, for my experience has taught me two things: one, that the cause of the great recession of the miners from the Welsh churches lies deep in the soul; and the other, that Christian involvement inevitably means tension and pain.

The miner can tell you why he is no longer inside the Church. He has plenty of reasons and they are all good ones. An ineffective, split, generation-bound Church provides plenty of them! Not the least damning of them—and the one nearest the deep truth—is that the Church is not interested in the worker and his claim for justice.

But these were all rather the occasion than the cause of the recession; the desired excuse, or the wisdom after the event. They are matters calling for reform, and in churches the majority of whose members were miners, and whose forms of government were mostly democratic, that should not have been too great a task. The true cause lay deeper, in a growing tension between the holiness of the Gospel and the demands of the workers' struggle for justice. For the Church is "for all sorts and conditions of men", and the Gospel preaches a love that knows no bounds. In our valley churches this universalism was represented, however inadequately, by the presence of managers and men in the same congregation of believers.

The miners' struggle for justice reached a crisis in the 1920's, and its strikes made totalitarian demands on the men—in a sectional cause which necessitated the treatment of other men as enemies, and which often released hate, the antithesis of Christian love. The tension set up by this situation in the souls of men who were at one and the same time practising Christians and struggling miners became unbearable, and demanded resolution in some way. A minority with ruthless honesty rejected God the ground of love, and gave their whole allegiance to the cause of the miners. These became the uninhibited leaders in the struggle, and many of them either were or were to become

Communists. Others, likewise a minority, chose the Church and the Gospel, and unpopularity within their own class. The majority, shirking the demands of the dilemma, slowly contracted out of it, freeing themselves from the claim of the Bible by relinquishing their Church membership, yet at the same time avoiding complete commitment to the class struggle, in which they anticipated the guilt with which a Christian upbringing might have saddled them. The faults of Trade Union and Church leaders alike gave ample justification to their attitude, which has by to-day become habitual. Religion and politics are among their chief topics of conversation. They are unquestioningly Left; and they believe in God and acknowledge Christ. But in the safety of pub and club they stand in costless judgment over the Communists to whom they owe their improved conditions of work and pay, and the churches to whom they owe their understanding of life in its depth. And they still draw their pay and send their children to Sunday School.

A higher standard of living, the hardening of new tendencies into contagious habits, and the rise of new generations have somewhat obscured the tension, but it is rediscovered in intense personal experience when someone chooses in 1954, as part of his Christian obedience, to become involved in the industrial class situation. He is placed in the position of owing strong allegiance at one and the same time to each of the two forces which the workers since the '20's have failed to reconcile. The newly involved Christian will be told point blank by interested parties that Christians and miners are mutually exclusive. He will feel the pulls of the dilemma when he asks: "How can you say 'Fair play to the manager' without becoming a boss's man, and thus losing your place in the leadership of the union?" He will vacillate between all-out faithfulness to his union struggle and to his Church work, and his judgments on the other at each period will be sharp and full of feeling.

It is just where the tension approaches breaking point that the Christian who refuses to give up will begin to discover his true vocation. The two worlds will allow him no easy seat on the fence. He cannot resolve the tension simply by a choice. He cannot escape from it to irresponsibility. He can only suffer it, and be broken by it—in place of the many for whom he has a Christian concern. And at that point he finds the company of Another whose body was broken for us, for the real Son of God who became really Son of Man must come close to the real Christian who is really taking his place in the aspirations and struggles of his class.

Frontier Chronicle

A New Christian College in England

It is delightful to find a new church conference centre, offering lay people a lively choice of courses for study, in a finely designed setting of modern decoration and architecture. William Temple College, founded in 1947 in memory of the great archbishop, spent a first experimental five years at Hawarden, near Chester, and has since 1953 suffered twelve months of transition and preparation for its recent reopening at The Old Rectory, Rugby. It has been worth all the delays.

The old house is almost unrecognizable inside, with its new and elegant decoration and furniture; and to it has been added an attractive wing of study

bedrooms, with more than a touch of the Festival of Britain about it. Many details of design from the magnificently printed prospectus to the excellent kitchens and crockery combine to offer a most appropriate physical and psychological setting for lay people's conferences. The first of many planned for this winter was designed for men from Warrington, and its members included industrial workers from both management and employee levels. We venture to prophesy that there will soon be a long waiting list of groups who will wish to enjoy the facilities of this fine new college.

And Another in Switzerland

It is interesting to compare with William Temple College "Boldern", a training centre of the Swiss Reformed Church at Männedorf, near Zurich. It owes its foundation to the personal determination of Dr. Hans J. Rinderknecht, backed by a full measure of Swiss efficiency and organization. Built only in 1947, it occupies a magnificent site on the northern hills above the lake of Zürich, and this position combines with the simple competence of its modern architecture to provide a very beautiful setting for Christian conferences.

"Boldern" offers, like the German Evangelical Academies, opportunities for lay people to discuss and consider religious and personal problems in professional and vocational groups, without any atmosphere of "churchiness" around them. For instance, at a recent weekend there was a conference for bakers and café proprietors (with

most careful provision made for the supervision and entertainment of their children, so that the whole family could have a weekend away from home). Dr. Rinderknecht has also been particularly concerned with the relations of the Swiss churches to the trade unions, for in Switzerland, as in Germany and France, there are old and even bitter antagonisms to be overcome. He wrote recently to the CHRISTIAN NEWS-LETTER:

"Years of economic prosperity have made it easy to fulfill a great many of the demands of the socialist party and of the trade unions, and therefore communism has found practically no support in Switzerland, and trade union leaders abandoned long ago the marxist ideology. Their present problem is how to win young workers for the cause of trade unionism, now that material aims are largely achieved and spiritual convictions are no longer burning as in

earlier times, when solidarity meant a real brotherhood of pioneers, fighting together for social justice.

"It is extremely difficult for the churches here to make real contact with the working classes. At the beginning of the socialist party in Switzerland there was no impetus from the side of the Church, and our religious social movement never reached the broad masses of the workers. In our earlier weekends for workers they told us again and again: 'You have left us alone: we had to fight for our rights—if not against the churches, then at least without them'. But we had to find a way to make contact with union leaders in some of the great factories. So in March last we tried a first four-day conference with two dozen workers and

union leaders, including some ex-marxists. We paid their wages for the four days: otherwise the workers would have been suspicious that they were being bought by the employers, some of whom are connected with our Centre.

"At this weekend there was a great frankness of discussion: indeed we had so open an atmosphere that lectures sometimes could not be delivered, for discussions started right after the first two sentences. But we had for the first time an impression that workers were realizing the need for a Christian hope and sense of responsibility in trade union life; and we hope to continue with further meetings of this kind. Already some of the two dozen have volunteered to start discussions in their factories".

French Protestants and the Priest-Workmen

The annual conference of the French Post-Fédé was held at Bièvres near Paris from September 10th to 13th. The Post-Fédé is an association which is open to all former members of the French Student Christian Movement. Other people who are interested are free to attend its annual conference, which has much the same fraternal and stimulating atmosphere as in England is associated with Swanwick. This year there was an attendance of about 150 including visitors from Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, and a special representative of CHRISTIAN NEWS-LETTER, who writes as follows: "The subject of the conference had to do with the problems raised for Protestants by what is happening in French Catholicism with special regard to the priest-workmen. The membership of the Post-Fédé is almost entirely Protestant, and it was as surprising as it was gratifying to find some Roman Catholics (priests

and laity) attending the conference and taking a prominent part in the discussions. Indeed, the opening address was given by a Roman Catholic who spoke about the present situation of Protestantism as seen by a Catholic. Such frank and friendly discussion between Protestants and Catholics would have been impossible twenty years ago, and the fact that it can now take place quite naturally and without any sense of strain is striking evidence of ecumenical advance. The attention of the conference was quite properly concentrated on France, and no doubt Christians there are being brought nearer together by their common discovery of the gulf that exists between the Churches (with their bourgeois affinities and characteristics) and the industrial proletariat. There was a remarkable absence on the part of the Protestants of any attempt to make capital out of the way the priest-workmen have been treated by

ecclesiastical authority. They recognize that they are in no position to throw stones, for they have shown so far much less imagination than the Catholics in trying to bridge the gulf, though there are one or two pastor-workmen, and the most moving address at the conference was given by one of them. Christians in France are certainly much more aware of the need for radically new methods

of evangelization than we are in England, and a process of what may be described as prophetic fermentation is increasingly at work among them. One sign of this is the weekly paper *Réforme* which is edited by Protestants but is widely read by Catholics as well, and is as good an example of Christian journalism as will be found anywhere in the world."

"The Open Door"

A Dutch Correspondent writes:—

"Those who try to preach the gospel in print are nearly always ministers; and they do not know the technique of writing for the many people who are not in touch with a church, and who will not read ordinary church magazines. Now it is the task of the Christian journalist to show in print the importance of the gospel; and for this work he must develop a first-class technique, speaking to ordinary people in everyday language. In Holland we have a fortnightly magazine, *The Open Door*, which with increasing success attempts to do this. It is produced by laymen, with some help

from ministers with real journalistic ability. *The Open Door* has a regular circulation of 100,000 copies, which rises to 280,000 for the Christmas and other special numbers. It is well illustrated with photographs, and appeals to people who are accustomed to reading illustrated magazines. It has no list of subscribers, but is delivered by church members to their non-church-going neighbours, a method of circulation which often provides useful personal contacts. About 5000 people work in these *Open Door* groups in about 250 parishes. The chief editor broadcasts to his readers once a month."

Eleven Drunk Girls

It sounded alarming when the United Kingdom Alliance reported that 1950-53 statistics showed an 80 per cent increase in convictions for drunkenness among girls under 21, and an 11 per cent increase in general juvenile intemperance. And a number of church leaders duly echoed a proper concern. It is fortunate that the statistics on which these figures were based do not in fact reveal so distressing a problem.

The towns on which these figures were based cover only some 4.2 millions of the population, and in-

clude certain dock and fishing centres, with a considerable number of foreign visitors. If, for instance, Salford, Swansea and Tynemouth had been omitted, the figures would have shown a decrease in convictions. And the total figures, for this 4.2 millions population, show an increase of only 48 juveniles, including only 11 more girls than in 1950. Indeed these statistics are more likely to be explained by a slightly greater vigilance on the part of certain police forces than by anything else.

M. G.

Book Reviews

Race and the Bible

The Chosen People or The Bible, Christianity and Race. By Gerald W. Broomfield.

(Longmans Green & Co., 1954. Pp. x, 91. Paper 4s., Cased 6s.)

Anthropologists, sociologists and economists have recently investigated the concept of race, but there has been no recent radical critique of it (at least in English) based on a theological understanding of man's nature, to enable Christians to handle the deep-rooted prejudices and habits which govern men's conduct in this sphere.

Canon Broomfield's book attempts "a fresh examination of the implications of the Christian religion in regard to race" (p. ix). He bases his study on the Bible, beginning with an exposition of the theme of "God's chosen people", and examining nationalism, racialism, the meaning of equality, colonialism, the problems of multi-racial countries, and social relations. A concluding chapter on "The human factor and the grace of God" brings the whole into focus in personal responsibility, making it clear that the basic trouble is "original sinfulness" and that therefore the basic need is for divine redemption. Corporate worship and Christian fellowship are practical ways in which Christianity makes its impact on the situation. Thus the book concludes with a return to its central theme of "the chosen people".

The author, a former missionary in East Africa and the General Secretary of the Universities' Mission to Central Africa, writes from first-hand knowledge and with deep conviction. His book is throughout dealing with actual situations and he shirks none of the most controversial and intractable issues, e.g. mixed marriages, self-government, political representation in multi-racial countries. He writes with admirable

clarity and precision. It is greatly to be hoped that the book will be widely read and meditated upon by Christians in Africa.

Where so much has been so admirably given to meet so long-felt a need, it is perhaps churlish to ask for more. Yet one wished that the author had gone deeper. Is the concept of "the chosen people" by itself an adequate category through which to expound a Christian theology of race and nation? While Canon Broomfield sets his study very admirably within this framework, it is not always easy to see how his judgements on concrete issues, admirable in themselves, arise from it.

Perhaps that is one reason why the book seems to lack any radical interpretation of the concept of race. Is the diversity of races part of the divine ordinance in creation, or the result of human sin (as might be inferred from the Babel story), or the former spoiled and twisted by the latter, or of no ultimate significance at all? Canon Broomfield touches on this question, for instance on p. 65, where he suggests that there is no Biblical ground for supposing "that there will be, or should be, a fusion of races". But a fuller study of the place of "race" in the created order and in the order of redemption, and of the relation between the two, would have been valuable. So with the idea of "nation"; the author avoids the peril of equating "the chosen people" with any contemporary nation, though the peril lurks near at hand when, writing of colonial powers, he says: "If they believe that, in their

work for the advancement of backward peoples, they have been *called* to be instrumental in the fulfilment of some particular divine purpose. . . ." (p. 48; reviewer's italics). Perhaps the more accurate word here would have been "*used*". Can nations as such have a divine vocation, or are they used as instruments of the divine purpose, like "Assyria, the rod of mine anger", to which Canon Broomfield refers on p. 37? What is the relation of the vocation or instrumentality of nations to the vocation of "the chosen people of God"? What is the theological basis for the assertion (p. 22) that "Man had a great deal to do with the making of the nations, but God made the races"?

Possibly it is this approach through the concept of the chosen people, tending to emphasize the Incarnation rather than the Atonement, which accounts for the feeling that the book, despite the forthrightness of many of its judgments, is too urbane, too "reasonable". For example, "The Bible teaches the principles upon which one should work, in this case I believe it teaches the only principles which can save the situation. . . ." (p. 56). The racial situation will not be saved by the application of any principles. The demonic forces at work within this sphere are not to be

exorcised by such sweetly reasonable means. No theology of race can be adequate which does not come to the Cross, to the point where the divine redeemer goes to the uttermost point of "unreasonable" sacrifice in identification with humanity and at the same time in separation from humanity. There is a sense in which Christians are compelled to say in one breath "yes" and "no" to their racial characteristics and their national heritage. Some at least may be called to bear witness to a universal redemption through suffering by sacrificial identification with those who suffer from racial discrimination.

The book gives admirable, Biblically-based guidance to individual Christians on inter-racial relationships, in terms of current attitudes amongst Christians in Britain. But it left one reader feeling that the powerful, irrational forces at work in national and racial groups had neither been analysed in terms of Christian theology nor reckoned with in the action recommended. Gratitude for a valuable book need not preclude the hope that the author and others will now break new ground in the theological understanding of race and nation, whereby Christians' faith may be deepened, their action directed and their corporate witness given a sharper cutting-edge. R. K. ORCHARD.

New Light on Russia

How Russia is Ruled. By Merle Fainsod. (Harvard. 48s.)

Betrayal of an Ideal. By Col. G. Tokaev. (Harvill. 21s.)

Not so long ago it used to be said, "No one knows anything about Russia. There are only relative degrees of ignorance". That was only a half-truth, but there was something in it. However, since the end of the war our knowledge has greatly increased. By now the information brought by D.P.'s has been carefully checked and collated; the Germans may have known next to

nothing about Russia in 1941, but by 1945 they knew a great deal and German knowledge is now added to our own; to read the Russian press as a free lance inquiry brings only limited dividends, but when groups of research workers in Universities or Government Departments make a prolonged systematic study of the Soviet press they can discover much.

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The results of all this have been coming out for some time in various specialist publications, but little has been available to the general public. Now, however, Mr. Fainsod has brought together in manageable form that part of this material which tells us "How Russia is Ruled". We are still ignorant of many things, but when one sees it all put together it is surprising how much of the picture can be filled in. And the book is easier to read than most of its kind; there is little padding and the evidence is marshalled with skill and judgment. Mr. Fainsod has "Russian sense", that understanding of what may be easily believed about the Soviet Union however fantastic it may seem, and of what must be dismissed as nonsense, however plausible it may sound.

Mr. Fainsod sets out to "communicate a sense of the living political processes in which Soviet rulers and subjects are enmeshed". And it is one of the merits of his work that he does not regard Soviet Communism as fixed in a mould, but he does not commit himself to any theory about the direction in which things are moving. Every one will find something different in this book, but I was particularly interested in the passages which bring together what little is known about the work of the Communist Party in the Russian countryside. As late as 1939 not one in twenty collective farms had its own Communist cell and there is little reason to think that since then the Party has increased its real support among the

peasants. Things like this explain the martinettish way in which Soviet farming is organized.

It is the nature of Mr. Fainsod's book that he describes things impersonally, but Col. Tokaev's "Betrayal of an Ideal" is nothing if not personal. The memories of those who "choose freedom" are always interesting when they describe their own experiences, but often boring when they generalize. Col. Tokaev is no exception.

He sees Russia from outside as a North Caucasian, but yet he belongs. It is as if a patriotic Welshman born in a remote district were to describe England. The book is the story of how an idealist from North Osetia came to learn the facts of Soviet life. The author's Quixotic priggery and his rash enthusiasms are an excellent foil for Soviet realities. Sometimes the contrast is comic; it is always tragic. Col. Tokaev took part in the secret opposition to Stalin for many years and his picture of conspiratorial life under Stalin is an addition to our knowledge. He was several times accused of being a "Bukharinist right-wing opportunist" and sometimes the accusation was made on absurd grounds, but after all it was roughly true. There was something in Tokaev's attitude, betrayed in apparently unimportant remarks, which showed that he was in fact a "right-wing opportunist". And that, I suppose, is what you and I would have been if we had been members of the Russian Communist Party about 1930.

J. W. L.

In the absence of my secretary a strange typist copied out the first draft of my editorial and she gave me a new word, "Ecumension", which seems too good to lose. Is this not that extra dimension which makes your true Ecumaniac different from others?

J. W. L.

Guardini

The Faith and Modern Man. By Romano Guardini. (Burns Oates. 15s.)

It is strange that to a generation well acquainted with Continental Christian writers, from Barth to Berdyaev to Maritain or Marcel, the name of Guardini should be so unfamiliar. A few people remember reading a little book called *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, published in England over fifteen years ago in a small pocket edition and seen sometimes in church tract-cases; some may remember also tales of exciting exploits among the Catholic Youth and of early conflict with the *Hitlerjugend*, and may associate these with Guardini. But there, apparently, it ends. Yet in his own country Guardini is as highly esteemed as Barth or Maritain in theirs, and exerts an influence hardly less great.

This new book by Guardini does not reveal in full the man's stature and eminence as a thinker. But it gives

a fair view of his prophetic insight and pastoral care. For it is a collection of booklets or messages composed for the inhabitants of Germany and distributed from house to house, even from hand to hand, enclosed in letters, for the comfort of each reader under the stress of war, of heavy bombardment and the menace of social and political collapse. The greater part of them was also delivered as evening lectures in a Berlin church, to an audience drawn from all sorts and sources, threatened from without by air-raids and from within by the secret police. They convey a strength and serenity of faith in what was, for the most devout and Christian of Germans, a stern test of this in the defeat of their country, and the overthrow of its dearest customs and institutions.

PATRICK McLAUGHLIN.

Catholic Ecumenism

One and Holy. By Karl Adam. (Sheed & Ward. 7s. 6d.)

Here is yet another Catholic book from Germany. The author is probably better known in this country than Guardini: his book *The Son of God* has long been treasured as an inquiry, alike doctrinally and devotionally rich, of the God-manhood of Jesus. In this present work Herr Adam is writing primarily for German Catholics, and urging them to pay serious attention to the Lutheran Reform—and not merely to its protest against practical abuses, but also to its religious aspirations and even to its doctrinal statements. The book is of far wider interest, however, and of greater import than just within Germany. It is an invaluable contribution to the whole ecu-

menical debate. Just as Barth is reputed to have hailed the Jesuit Fr. von Balthazar as the man who penetrated and understood his thought as no one else has done, so Luther might greet Herr Adam as among his best apologists. He displays an innate sympathy with Luther's sincerely passionate faith and desire to know and articulate the essence of the Gospel; at the same time he shows, sympathetically but frankly, the vitiated historical context in which Luther lived—the Ockhamism which formed his thought and which he identified with Catholicism (or which at least he supposed to be the normal and proper mode of understanding it) and the peculiarly bad

ecclesiastical conditions in Germany which suffered more than almost any other country from the maladministration of its prelates and the predatory practices of the Papacy.

Against this background, however, Herr Adam claims that, as Germany was the place where the sixteenth-century reform *and schism* began, so it will be the place of the new reform *and of return to unity*. There is already evidence that this may be so—first in the Liturgical Movement (which is so much more than a concern for rite and ceremony, and which is indeed in its full implications a New Reformation), with its “high-places” in Klosterneuberg and Maria Laach, and secondly in the joint use by Catholics and Protestants of the same churches in the post-war years. There is here a *psychological* preparedness for union—an eirenic temper, displacing the former rivalry or hostility—which is not so clearly developed in other countries. But there is also a measure of *doctrinal* readiness more

marked than elsewhere. For some years now leading Churchmen in Germany (such as Dr. Stahlin, late Bishop of Oldenburg) have been recalling their followers from the emasculated theology of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (which have long been regarded as typical statements of Protestantism) to original Lutheranism, the full doctrine and practice of Luther himself. Herr Adam’s thesis is that “ rapprochement between Catholicism and Protestantism will be possible *only if it takes Luther as its starting-point*” (author’s italics). . . . “We must build from Luther outwards if we are to bridge the gulf between the Christian confessions”.

Even if this be taken in reference to Germany, it is a large and startling claim—especially when made by a Roman Catholic. Its implications for the whole ecumenical movement are enormous, and demand long and deep study. Herr Adam merits our respect and gratitude for bringing them to our notice. PATRICK McLAUGHLIN.

A brisk demand for back numbers of the CHRISTIAN NEWS-LETTER has made the issues for January 1953 and January 1954 very scarce. The editors would be very grateful to any readers who have unwanted copies of *these issues* if they would send them to the Subscription Secretary, CHRISTIAN NEWS-LETTER, 4 High Street, Windsor.

N.B. There is still a sufficient stock of other numbers of the CHRISTIAN NEWS-LETTER.

INDEX TO THE CHRISTIAN NEWS-LETTER

Would any readers who would like an index to the CHRISTIAN NEWS-LETTER for 1953 and 1954 at a charge of 2s. please write to the editor.

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Letters to the Editor

DEAR EDITOR,

I read with great interest the article in your last issue on "Recognizing the People of God", but some points in it left me puzzled. The writer speaks of the Anglican "group" at the Swanwick Conference as professing repentance for three things: "That we feel ourselves a step above the chapels, our ministries more fully so than others, our buildings better and older".

The words seem to be a quotation from an Anglican group manifesto, and the writer of the article is therefore not responsible for them, but as he quotes them with approval I should like to comment on them. The three subjects of repentance are of very different importance:

1. "That we feel ourselves to be a step above the chapels." If by "a step above" moral or spiritual superiority is implied, that attitude certainly calls for repentance; but the phrase is not clear.

2. "That our buildings are better and older" is merely a statement of fact—though good manners should prevent its being underlined—and is surely not in itself a matter for penitence.

3. The most important of all, "That we repent of feeling our ministries (to be) more fully so than others". That is, presumably, of feeling them to be more valid, or more regular, than others. Surely this is carrying tolerance too far? What is the distinguishing mark of an Anglican save that, on the points where Anglicanism differs from Rome (and the Orthodox) on the one hand and from the Free Churches on the other, he believes Anglicanism to be right and the others mistaken. This is not to say, of course, that he does not know himself to have very much in common with them, but merely that on the particular points in dispute between them, of which the question of orders is a very important one, he agrees with his own Church as against theirs.

I do not see how an Anglican can reasonably "repent" of holding that the Anglican view of the Ministry is truer than the Nonconformist view; as well expect a Socialist to "repent" of believing in nationalization. Let us by all means show penitence for our failures in charity to our fellow Christians, but the cause of unity will not be served by blinking facts.

Yours truly,

J. BAILEY.

17th September, 1954.

Mr. Robertson writes:

"I find myself so much in agreement with your correspondent that it is hard to answer her letter. She is quite right that I was quoting from Anglicans and I agree with her that the three subjects of repentance are of very different importance. I think that what the Anglicans at Swanwick meant was the attitude of mind—almost of pride—which arises from these three things. If the Baptists were to have made a statement of repentance similar to that made by the Anglicans, it would have been, I think, that they repented of asserting the truth to which they bear witness in Believers' Baptism in such a way that they blinded themselves to the related truth expressed in the teachings of others about Infant Baptism."



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Some pamphlets about the Evanston Assembly have already appeared, with admirable promptitude. The S.C.M. Press have just issued *Looking at Evanston* (3s. 6d.), a popular survey of the Assembly's work by H. G. G. Herklots. They have also published final editions of the six surveys prepared for delegates: *Faith and Order*, *Evangelism*, *Social Questions*, *International Affairs*, *Inter-group Relations* (on racial questions), and *The Laity—the Christian in his Vocation* (2s. 6d. each). The British Council of Churches have issued a rather plain-looking selection from the various messages and reports, *Evanston Essentials* (6d.). (They also offer, most efficiently, a sound film, a film strip and a long-playing record about the Assembly.)

Enough of Evanston, or we shall all suffer Ecumenical Indigestion! From the World Council of Churches has come a series of illustrated booklets about the practical work of the world Church: excellent for bookstalls, but rather dear at 4d. each (obtainable from British Council of Churches). A more substantial bulletin from Geneva is one of their Ecumenical studies, *Evangelism in Scotland* (2s. from B.B.C., or Iona Community, Glasgow). This is an authoritative and readable survey, edited by T. Ralph Morton. British writers also make a notable contribution to a recent number of *The Student World*, No. 184, on "Communication" (2s. 6d.

from S.C.M., Annandale, N.W.11). The articles by R. Gregor Smith, David Read, and Ian Pitt-Watson should not be missed by those interested in evangelism among intellectuals.

Two new pamphlets on sex questions are worth mentioning for their frankness and common sense. Canon H. C. Warner has published his essay on *Theological Issues of Contraception* (S.C.M. Press, 6d.); and the International Missionary Council has issued the first of a most promising series of research pamphlets, *African Marriage*, by T. Price (2s. 6d., and again from the S.C.M. Press, who are surely to be congratulated on their recent pamphlet literature). Another notable booklet on a missionary theme is *Silent Ambassador*, by F. A. Smalley (Lutterworth Press, 2s.). The general secretary of the United Society for Christian Literature speaks with authority of the demands for literature among newly literate peoples, and of the pitifully small quantities of Christian reading material available for these new mass markets.

Finally, S.P.C.K. are to be congratulated on the production of four brief, devastating and provocative pamphlets by K. N. Ross (9d. each). The subjects speak for themselves: *Spiritualism*, *Astrology*, *Christian Science*, and *Jehovah's Witnesses*.

M. G.

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The Editors will welcome and always acknowledge letters on the contents and policy of the **CHRISTIAN NEWS-LETTER**. They will also be very glad to receive from readers the name and address of any one who might be interested to receive details of the **CHRISTIAN NEWS-LETTER**.

The next Frontier Luncheon

CHURCH AND INDUSTRY IN SHEFFIELD

Canon E. R. Wickham, the speaker at the next Frontier Luncheon, has spent the last ten years working with the heavy steel industry in the Sheffield area where he has been instrumental in building up the Sheffield Industrial Mission.

The Luncheon will be at 12.45 on Thursday, 18th November, in the Crypt of St. Martin-in-the-Field, Trafalgar Square.

The chair will be taken by Sir Wilfred Garrett, formerly H.M. Chief Factory Inspector.

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